7: Gulick E-5 (1952) 1955 ME1 Lebanon ME1

Finally, we come to the town of Jbeyl whose population was estimated in 1932 to be 5000, (Hitzenbih, 1936, p. 9). It is now probably considerably more. It is surrounded by banana plantations and is currently enjoying a period of prosperity and growth largely because of the recently installed irrigation system. The highway runs right through the commercial center of the town, and though we must be careful to avoid collision with heavily laden donkeys, sheep, fowl, oxen, honking taxis, trucks and buses, we are aware that the street is lined with small shops of all kinds. On our left we pass the local courthouse, a neat modernistic structure from which the national flag flies, and around which stand or sit a few members of the national gendarmerie, in khaki uniforms, with rifles slung over their shoulders. If our eyes are sharp, we will notice also, a small sign which reads "Fouilles de Byblos," with an arrow pointing towards the sea. And in this direction we can hardly fail to miss seeing the crownless vault which is all that remains of the upper levels of a castle built by the Crusaders. If we have prepared ourselves properly, we will know that this ruin is surrounded by others of much greater age which attest to the fact that the hustle through which we are passing is but the current phase in the life of one of the oldest continuously inhabited sites in the world. Later we will learn that Jbeyl is the primary marketing center of Mamjil.

Shortly after leaving Jbeyl, we pass the unpaved road which leads to the large village of 'Amshit built on a small rise in the land at some distance from the highway. We must deduce its identity from our map, for there is, as usual, no sign. After the rather sharp turn near al-Burj, the road dips downward and our view to the north is suddenly blocked completely by the ridge to which some reference has already been made. The ridge appears to plunge, at a moderately steep angle, directly into the sea, but we notice that the highway continues on around it. We, however, turn sharply to the right on a side road which we can see winds up the ridge. We stop, athwart the railroad tracks, to allow a man, whose head is swathed in a *kefiyah* and crowned by an *agal*, to drive his herd of fat-tailed sheep across the road. He pays no particular attention to us, for he is a stranger here himself, though he has probably come this way for years. However, after we have wound our way upwards for a few minutes we pass a group of men who are lounging in the shade of a carob tree, eating lunch. They stare hard and fixedly at us, and one of them gets to his feet to have a better look. Our major ascent is finished when we reach the crest of the ridge, and we find on each side of the road the neat terraces of figs and olives which belong to Jiddayil. Some the houses close in tightly, but briefly, on both sides. As we pass through, a rooster flaps across the road, just missing our wheels. A few human figures step out of doorways to see who is coming and stand staring at us. Off to the right of the straight road from Jiddayil to Shaykhan we see smoke pouring from the open top of a limekiln. To the left, still at some distance, we see, at last, the houses of Mamjil, ranging in color from white to tawny to grey. They are perched, seemingly on top